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the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Fourteenth periodic reports of States parties due in 1998

Addendum

Cameroon*

[12 August 1997]

* This report incorporates in a single document the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports of Cameroon due on 24 July 1990, 1992, 1994 and 1996 respectively. For the ninth periodic report of Cameroon and the summary records of the Committee's meetings at which the report was considered, see CERD/C/171/Add.1 and CERD/C/SR.880-881 respectively.

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Introduction

1. This report incorporates the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports of Cameroon, submitted late, under article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It principally covers the period from August 1990 to June 1997.

2. The report contains, inter alia, information on the legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures taken by Cameroon to implement the provisions of the Convention. It updates the previous reports in the light of the comments made by the members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

I. GENERAL

A. Land and people

1. Land

3. Cameroon is located in central Africa, at the far end of the Gulf of Guinea just above the equator, between 2° and 13° north and 8°, 30° and 16° east; it is triangular in shape and covers a total area of 475,000 km^2. It stretches 1,200 kilometres from Lake Chad to its southern border with the Republics of Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Congo, and the base of the triangle runs 800 kilometres from east to west, from the border with the Central African Republic to the Atlantic Ocean, where it has a 400-kilometre coastline. Cameroon is bordered to the west by the Federal Republic of Nigeria and to the north-east by the Republic of Chad.

4. Cameroon is characterized by an extreme diversity of natural environments:

Lush forest covers 42 per cent of the territory, representing an area of almost 20 million hectares;

The northern part of Cameroon, which has a tropical climate, is an area of savannah, made up of vast grasslands on the high Adamaoua plateau and of steppes in the extreme north.

The west and north-west, with a temperate climate, are mountainous regions whose ranges stretch from the south-west coast to the Mandara mountains in the extreme north of the country, where the 4,070 metre-high Mt. Cameroon is located.

2. People

(a) Ethnic and demographic features

5. In prehistoric times, Cameroon was apparently peopled mainly by Pygmies, who are considered as its authentic indigenous inhabitants. People of small stature (1.5 metres), the Pygmies lived from hunting and gathering, but began to practise agriculture, which led them to take up a settled existence.

Subsequently, the Sao, Kotoko, Sudanese, Peulh and Bantu peoples settled in Cameroon. All these migrations were brought to a halt by the European invasion (German, French and British).

6. Cameroon's population today comprises more than 230 ethnic groups defined on the basis of dialect, and divided into five major groups:

The Bantu, in the South, Littoral, South-West, Centre and South-East provinces comprise the Beti, Bassa, Douala, Yambassa, Maka, Kaka, Bakweri, Bali, and others;

The semi-Bantu, in the West and North-West provinces include the Bamileke, Bamoun, Tikar and Bali;

The Sudanese, in the Adamaoua, North and far North provinces, include the Mundang, Toupouri, Kotoko, Kapsiki, Mandara, Haoussa, Matakam, Bornouam, and Massa;

The Peulh, who inhabit the same provinces as the Sudanese;

The Choa Arab people living in the Lake Chad basin.

7. The Pygmy population, comprising the Baka and Bakola in the east and south and the Bagyeli and Bedzam in the Tikar plain, is estimated at about 50,000 persons.

8. Far from being a source of conflict and an obstacle to coexistence, this ethnic diversity is viewed by the authorities and the populations as a source of mutual enrichment, with the clearly understood and commonly accepted objective of using it as the foundation of a genuine nation where peace, understanding and justice prevail and in which each citizen is bound to feel at home everywhere.

9. Attaining this objective means eliminating all forms of discrimination, a goal that the Government pursues by means of the following programmes:

National integration;

Balanced regional development;

The equitable sharing of the fruits of growth;

Democratization and liberalization;

Protection of minorities and underprivileged groups.

(b) Socio-economic and cultural indicators

10. According to the most recent census, in 1987, Cameroon had a population of approximately 10,493,655, with a growth rate of 2.6 per cent between 1960 and 1992, and a population density of 24.4 inhabitants per square kilometre. In 1997, the population was estimated at 14,045,000, 6,921,000 of whom are males and 7,124,000 females.

11. The population includes 2,600,000 Catholics, 2,586,000 Muslims and 1,900,000 Protestants.

12. Cameroon's population may be broken down as follows:

By sex: 51 per cent females and 49 per cent males;

By age: 40 per cent aged under 15, 50 per cent aged from 16 to 64 and 10 per cent aged 65 or over;

By place of residence: approximately one third of the population is urban and two thirds rural.

Life expectancy is 59 years for women and 54.5 years for men.

13. The literacy rate, estimated at 68 per cent, is currently declining, although it is one of the highest in the central Africa subregion.

14. The following statistics are also worthy of note:

Per capita income:	approximately US$ 600 in 1996/97;
Gross domestic product:	CFAF 4 943 billion in 1996/97;
Inflation rate:	approximately 4 per cent in 1996/97;
External debt:	CFAF 3 756 billion in 1996/97;
Unemployment rate:	approximately 20 per cent of the population in 1996/97;
Mother tongues:	approximately 230;
Infant mortality rate:	63 per 1 000 in 1992/93;
Maternal mortality rate:	550 per 100 000 live births, and may be as high as 900 per 100 000 in the great north;
Fertility rate:	16.6 per 1 000 in 1992/93;
Crude death rate:	11.4 per 1 000 in 1993/97.

15. There are approximately 4 million foreigners from countries throughout the world living peacefully alongside the national population. As at 30 September 1996, moreover, there were approximately 46,694 refugees in Cameroon, including 44,907 Chadians, 669 Rwandans, 225 Burundians, 43 Zairians, 149 Liberians and 701 persons of various other nationalities.

B. Political structure

16. After the German, French and British colonial periods, Cameroon acquired national sovereignty on 1 January 1960.

17. The official languages are French and English.

18. Cameroon is a unitary, decentralized and democratic State with a semi-presidential regime. The executive, legislative and judicial branches are separate. Legislative power lies with a National Assembly (Parliament) consisting of 180 deputies. As a result of the 18 January 1996 constitutional reform, the Cameroonian justice system was transformed from a judicial authority into a real judiciary. Its ability to safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms was thereby enhanced.

19. The country is divided for administrative purposes into 10 provinces, themselves divided into 58 departments which are subdivided into 269 arrondissements and 53 districts.

20. A multi-party system was instituted in 1990, since when there have been four elections. In 1992, six political parties took part in the legislative elections. In 1996, 36 political parties participated in the municipal elections; town councillors representing 15 of them were elected. Many town halls are administered by the opposition. In May 1997, 44 political parties took part in the legislative elections. Parliament is composed of deputies representing seven different political groupings.

21. Article 3 of Act No. 092/002 of 14 August 1992 on the terms of election of municipal councillors stipulates that:

> The ballot to elect municipal councillors shall be a mixed ballot with a simple majority system and a proportional system;
>
> Each list shall be drawn up so as to take into account the constituency's different sociological elements.

The Communes Act stipulates that mayors are to be elected from within the municipal council.

22. These provisions, which were implemented in the first multi-party municipal elections, held in 1996, are intended to ensure that small political groupings and minority ethnic groups are represented on municipal councils.

23. Likewise, article 5 of Act No. 91/20 of 16 December 1991, which sets the terms of election of deputies to the National Assembly, provides that they are to be elected under a list system, with no preferential vote or combining of lists; each legally recognized political party puts up a complete list with as many candidates from among its members as there are seats to be filled. The condition concerning the sociological composition of the list, applicable to municipal elections, likewise applies to the election of deputies. These provisions were also strictly enforced in the multi-party legislative elections held in 1992 and 1997.

C. General legal framework within which human rights are protected

1. Treaty-based safeguards

24. Cameroon has ratified numerous international human rights conventions or covenants and their additional protocols. We may cite the following:

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol (ratified on 27 June 1984);

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified on 24 June 1971);

The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified on 19 December 1986);

The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (ratified on 1 November 1976);

The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (date of accession: 6 October 1972);

The 1953 Protocol Amending the Slavery Convention of 1926;

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (signed on 6 June 1983, ratified on 23 August 1994);

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ratified on 27 June 1984);

The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery;

The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (date of succession: 23 October 1961) and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (ratified on 19 September 1967);

The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others;

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (signed on 27 September 1990 and ratified on 11 January 1993);

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

2. Constitutional safeguards

25. Since it acquired sovereignty in 1960, Cameroon has been committed to upholding human rights and through the phases of its development as a State it has endowed itself with a constitution whose cornerstone is human rights.

26. Act No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 amending the Constitution vested human rights with genuine constitutional status by incorporating into its preamble a specific reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, and to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its Eighteenth Session held in June 1981.

27. The Cameroonian people "proclaims that the human being, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights". It affirms its commitment to the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and all relevant and duly ratified international conventions, and in particular its commitment to the following principles:

Everyone has equal rights and obligations. The State endeavours to assure for all its citizens the conditions necessary for their development;

The State shall ensure protection for minorities and preserve the rights of the indigenous populations, in conformity with the law;

Everyone has the right to settle anywhere and to move about freely, subject to the statutory provisions concerning public order, security and tranquillity;

No one shall be harassed because of his origin, opinions or beliefs in religious, philosophical or political matters, subject to respect for public order and morality;

The State is secular. The neutrality and independence of the State in respect of all religions are guaranteed;

Freedom of religion and freedom to practise a religion are guaranteed;

No one shall be subjected to prosecution, arrest or detention except in the cases and in the manner determined by the law, which shall not be retroactive;

The law ensures the right of everyone to a fair hearing before the courts;

Freedom of communication, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of trade unions and freedom to strike are guaranteed under the conditions fixed by the law;

The nation protects and promotes the family, the natural basis of human society. It protects women, young persons, the elderly and the disabled;

Everyone has the right and duty to work;

The State guarantees to all citizens of both sexes the rights and freedoms set out in the preamble of the Constitution.

3. Safeguards other than those of the Constitution

28. The implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is guaranteed in Cameroon by judicial or administrative bodies which apply national instruments for the protection of human rights, including legislative or regulatory instruments, and in particular the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Investigation, legislation relating to the press, political parties, associations and various freedoms.

29. The Penal Code provides for and penalizes offences against the fundamental rights enshrined both in the Convention and in the Constitution, such as the various property rights, and the rights to individual physical and moral integrity, as well as all forms of violations of the right of persons to freedom and tranquillity.

(a) Foremost among the competent institutions responsible for enforcing the various protective instruments referred to above is the judiciary: its mission is to ensure respect for the rights of all citizens and residents, to protect their person, property and honour, and to settle any litigation between them.

The judiciary comprises the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal and the ordinary courts. It is independent from the executive and legislative branches. In performing their judicial functions, judges are answerable only to the law and to their conscience.

Moreover, Cameroon is a party to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, under which individuals may bring complaints of violations of the rights enshrined in the Covenant provided all domestic remedies have been exhausted (see the Abdoulaye Mazou and Albert Mukong cases).

The judicial police are authorized to investigate major and minor offences, to gather evidence and to bring offenders before the courts responsible for punishing them. The Ministry of Territorial Administration has specific responsibility for questions relating, inter alia, to freedom of association and expression.

(b) Anyone who alleges that his rights have been violated may set the matter before the criminal courts, if the violation comes under the Penal Code or a provision of the special criminal legislation, and may bring criminal indemnification proceedings. He or she may also sue the person responsible for the injury in the civil courts to obtain redress in the form of damages.

(c) The Cameroonian Constitution guarantees the rights set forth in the international human rights instruments. They include equality among citizens without distinction as to race, sex or religion.

(d) The human rights instruments are incorporated into domestic law through ratification. Pursuant to article 43 of the Constitution, the

President of the Republic negotiates and ratifies international treaties and agreements. Those which concern the law are submitted for approval by Parliament, through legislation, prior to ratification.

(e) In conformity with article 45 of the Constitution, international treaties or agreements which have been ratified take precedence, as soon as they have been published, over the law. They may then be invoked before the courts or administrative bodies. However, in order for criminal provisions to be applicable, they must be supplemented in the national legislation by appropriate penalties. Thus, Act No. 97/009 of 10 January 1997 incorporated the offence of torture into the Cameroonian Penal Code by laying down penalties for such criminal actions.

(f) A national committee on human rights and freedoms was set up by decree No. 90/1459 of 8 November 1990. The Committee, which has legal personality, comprises a Chairman, who is an independent figure, and 20 members, 3 of whom represent the administration (1 from the Ministry of Justice and 2 representing the Supreme Court and judges) and persons representing a number of representative associations from the sphere of human rights. Numerous non-governmental organizations supplement and further the Committee's work. Efforts are made through ad hoc seminars and publications to make the public concerned and the competent authorities more familiar with the human rights instruments.

II. INFORMATION IN RELATION TO ARTICLES 2 TO 7 OF THE CONVENTION

Article 2

30. Cameroon prohibits and punishes all acts and practices by individuals, groups or organizations which result in discrimination.

31. Article 1 of the Penal Code stipulates that the criminal law applies to everyone. This article establishes the principle of the equality of all before the law. Only the law can introduce derogations from this principle through an exception adding to or detracting from the general principle. For example, the provisions of article 80 of the Penal Code benefiting minors take precedence over the provisions of article 1 of the Code. Similarly, a pregnant woman cannot be sentenced to a prison term; a woman who has just given birth cannot serve a sentence until six weeks following the delivery.

32. Before taking up their duties, judges take an oath which prohibits them from showing any favouritism in their decisions.

33. Acts of discrimination are punished. For example, article 242 of the Penal Code establishes a prison term of one to two years and a fine of CFAF 5,000 to CFAF 500,000 for any person who refuses another access to a public place or to an occupation on account of his race or religion. This provision is intended by the State to discourage all forms of discrimination.

34. Penalties are laid down for offences committed by persons responsible for enforcing human rights (police, army, judiciary). In this connection, article 132 bis of the Penal Code, introduced by Act No. 97/009 of 10 January 1997 amending certain of the Code's provisions, stipulates:

"1. Anyone who involuntarily causes the death of another through torture shall be liable to life imprisonment.

"2. The sentence shall be imprisonment for 10 to 20 years when the torture causes the victim to be permanently deprived of the use of all or part of a member, organ or sense.

"3. The sentence shall be imprisonment for 5 to 10 years and a fine of CFAF 100,000 to 1 million when the torture causes the victim to become ill or unable to work for a period of more than 30 days.

"4. The sentence shall be imprisonment for two to five years and a fine of CFAF 50,000 to 200,000 when the torture causes the victim to become ill or unable to work for a period equal to or less than 30 days, or to undergo mental or psychological pain or suffering."

35. Cameroon has also taken numerous steps to promote equal enjoyment of rights in the following areas:

Promotion and compulsory nature of consent to marriage for both future spouses;

Possibility for a wife to practise a different profession from that of her spouse without prior authorization from the spouse and to enjoy the fruits of her labour;

Recognition of the right of both boys and girls to inherit from their parents;

Consideration of the surviving spouse in the succession of the predeceased spouse;

Freedom for wives to leave the territory, pursuant to the repeal, by Act No. 90/043 of 19 December 1990, of the marital authorization requirement.

36. Measures are also taken to achieve equality of the sexes. Cameroonian women have access to employment in all areas:

Public service: 32.6 per cent of State personnel are women. Two women are permanent cabinet secretaries;

Justice: one woman is a Supreme Court counsellor and another is President of the Court of Appeal;

Government: there are two women ministers;

National Assembly: there are nine women deputies as of the latest legislative elections, held on 17 May 1997;

Women represent 52.8 per cent of the tertiary sector; the Chief Executive Officer of the National Investment Corporation, which controls all the enterprises in the State portfolio, is a woman;

Women represent 43.8 per cent of the medical and social sector.

There is equal remuneration in all sectors.

37. According to the Preamble to the Cameroonian Constitution of 18 January 1996, the State ensures the protection of minorities and safeguards the rights of indigenous populations. Thus Cameroon seeks to ensure the appropriate development and protection of certain groups, in order to enable them fully to exercise their rights under conditions of equality.

38. The Government basically seeks to develop in these population groups a sense of belonging to the national community, such an awareness being a necessary stage in their socio-economic integration. For example, measures are being taken on behalf of the nomads in northern Cameroon. The goal is to introduce them to agriculture and stock-raising. Research is being conducted to find plants for cattle feed that are resistant in all seasons.

39. State action is also aimed at the Pygmies in the eastern and southern provinces, who are covered by the "Socio-economic integration of the Baka/Bakola" project. The strategy is to:

Stabilize the Pygmies in their camps;

Introduce them to own-account agricultural work;

Improve and humanize relations between the Pygmies and their Bantu neighbours;

Build health centres and introduce health and sanitation measures;

Enrol Baka/Bakola children in schools (construction of schools in the camps). In 1992 there were more than 1,500 pupils at the primary level and about 15 at the secondary level. The State provided them with special academic assistance, which amounted to an estimated CFAF 245 million between 1986 and 1994.

40. State action in this area is supported by missionaries and development assistance volunteers from the Netherlands.

41. Special measures are also being taken for the benefit of the Pygmies. For example, Pygmies are admitted to the teacher training schools in the eastern part of the country on the basis of a certificate of primary and basic education, while a higher level (brevet d'études) is required of the other population groups. The purpose of these special measures is to provide the members of this vulnerable group with the protection needed to safeguard the enjoyment and exercise of their rights and fundamental freedoms under conditions of equality. In 1992 there were eight Baka/Bakola teachers, two nursing auxiliaries and two agricultural instructors. Cultural groups and football teams have also been set up.

42. International (bilateral and multilateral) cooperation includes studies aimed at understanding the philosophy of life of these groups in order to provide them with appropriate assistance for their internal development while

emphasizing the preservation of their cultural identity. A support project for Pygmy self-advancement was set up with this in mind. Project RAF (Research, Action, Training), supported by a French non-governmental organization, the African Institute for Economic and Social Development - African Training Centre (IF), seeks to help the Pygmies organize themselves in such a way as to enable them to express themselves and be heard, achieve recognition as a minority people and find a path of development that takes their culture into account.

43. Project RAF involves the pygmies in its activities. The different Pygmy groups are encouraged to become involved in the research, with the support of the staff of the projects assisting them. The goal sought is to enable them to express themselves about what they are, how they view their environment and how they analyse their role in this context. The research should lead to actions which they have selected themselves as priorities for their future.

44. The African Institute for Economic and Social Development - African Training Centre (IF) is trying in this way to support the Pygmies in seeking development that is suited to them and will enable them to preserve basic values of their culture, but will also help them emerge from their marginality and establish a more comfortable place for themselves in Cameroonian society.

45. Lastly, the Government of Cameroon pays special attention to disabled people. A 1983 law and a 1990 decree implementing the law guarantee special rights for the disabled. Both instruments make disabled people's access to health care, education, vocational training, employment, sports and leisure an obligation deriving from national solidarity. The following preferential measures are provided for disabled children:

Age exemption for admission to schools at all levels;

Partial or total payment of public transport fees;

Encouragement for the establishment of associations and for community action aimed at the achievement of socio-economic autonomy (establishment of cooperatives).

Article 3

46. Apartheid, as referred to in article 3, is completely unknown among the population of Cameroon, a multi-ethnic country. At the international level, Cameroon condemned the practice of apartheid previously existing in South Africa, which officially ended with the introduction of equal voting rights.

Article 4

47. Press articles disseminating ideas based on racial superiority or hatred or inciting racial discrimination or other discriminatory acts are regarded as undermining public order or decency. Such publications are prohibited, and the competent court may order the press organ to be seized; it also has the power to ban the organ. The decision to seize or ban the organ may be appealed.

48. If the press article in question is insulting to a race or religion to which several citizens or residents belong, the author is liable to a prison term of six days to six months and a fine of CFAF 5,000 to 20,000,000. If the offence is committed for the purpose of inciting hatred or scorn among citizens, those penalties are doubled (Penal Code, art. 241).

49. Similarly, any association or organization whose activities encourage racial discrimination is undermining public order, and its activities may be suspended by the Minister of Territorial Administration for a period not to exceed three months (Act No. 90/053 of 19 December 1990 concerning freedom of association).

50. The only legal provisions that stipulate prison terms or fines for acts that may be qualified as "discrimination" are articles 241 and 242 of the Penal Code. These provisions are seldom applied, however, as such behaviour is very rare and contrary to the hospitable nature of the people.

Article 5

51. The Constitution, Penal Code, Code of Criminal Investigation, the Civil Code and Code of Civil Procedure provide for equal access to the courts for all citizens. In this connection, there is a procedure which enables destitute people to obtain legal aid to defend their rights in court.

52. Regarding the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm inflicted by public officials, article 132 of the Penal Code establishes a prison term of six months to five years for public servants guilty of violence against others. Similarly, article 132 bis of the Penal Code punishes as "torture" any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical, mental or psychological, is intentionally inflicted on a person, for such purposes as obtaining a confession from him or a third person, by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

53. Where political rights are concerned, any Cameroonian citizen who is not under a legal disqualification and who meets the age and morality requirements is entitled to stand for election or vote on the basis of universal and equal suffrage (Act No. 91/020 of 16 December 1991 establishing the conditions for election of deputies to the National Assembly, as amended by the Act of 19 March 1997, Act No. 92/002 of 14 August 1992 on the conditions for election of municipal councillors and Act No. 92/10 of 17 July 1992 establishing the conditions for election of the President of the Republic and alternates).

54. The Constitution and specific laws furthermore guarantee many other civil rights, including:

The right to settle in any place and to move about freely. Freedom of movement is provided for in Act No. 90-043 of 19 December 1990 on the requirements for entering, residing in and leaving Cameroon.

Freedom to come and go is therefore guaranteed by law and can be restricted only under a state of emergency, proclamation of which is governed by strict rules. A state of emergency has been proclaimed only once since 1990, and in only one province, because of serious disturbances of public order. The restriction lasted for a period of six months.

The right to leave and return to Cameroon is also guaranteed by law;

The right to marriage and choice of spouse (guaranteed by the Civil Code);

Freedom of worship and freedom to practise one's religion;

The right to freedom of expression, guaranteed by the Act on the mass media;

The right to freedom of assembly and association, guaranteed by Act No. 90-55 of 19 December 1990 and Act No. 90-53 of 19 December 1990, as well as by Act No. 90-56 of 19 December 1990 concerning political parties, article 9 of which states:

> "Political parties shall be established and conduct their activities freely in the framework of the Constitution and this Act. No political party can be authorized if it undermines national and territorial integrity, the republican form of government, national sovereignty or national integrity, in particular by any kind of discrimination based on tribes, provinces, linguistic groups or religious denominations."

According to article 2 of the Labour Code, the right to work "shall be recognized as a fundamental right of each citizen; the State shall make every effort to help citizens find and remain in employment".

The right to education and training and the right to equal participation in cultural activities are guaranteed, as is the right of access to any place or service intended for use by the general public: article 242 of the Penal Code sets penalties for anyone who refuses another access to a public place.

The right to form and join trade unions is guaranteed by Act No. 92/007 of 4 August 1992 establishing the Labour Code, pursuant to which "the law recognizes the right of workers and employers, without restrictions of any kind and without need of prior authorization, freely to form trade unions for the purpose of the study, defence, development and protection of their interests, particularly their economic, industrial, commercial and agricultural interests, as well as for the social, economic, cultural and moral advancement of their members. Trade unions are forbidden from conducting any activities that are not conducive to the promotion of these objectives".

Article 6

55. Any person who has suffered injury as a result of any act whatsoever, including an act of discrimination, has the right to apply to the competent court for compensation. The principle of two hearings is generally accepted

in Cameroonian law. Anyone who is not satisfied by the decision of the court of first instance is entitled to have the same matter re-examined by the court of appeal for example, in the Kago Lele case, concerning an entry in the registry of voters, and in the Mongo Beti case, concerning a candidature for the National Assembly, the individuals in question both won their cases. Violations of the law are also punished by the Supreme Court.

56. As discrimination based on race or religion is seldom found in the Cameroonian social mentality, no cases involving discrimination, in particular based on article 242 of the Penal Code, which makes discrimination an offence, are brought before the courts; this explains the absence of case law in the matter.

Article 7

57. The primary, secondary and higher education curricula include courses on the United Nations and its role. The higher the educational level, the more advanced is the course. In the law faculties, in particular, the concept of human rights is taken as the basis for several courses covering equality among individuals, relations between the State and citizens, and protection of the individual.

58. In the cultural sphere, cultural associations are made up of members of several ethnic groups and therefore of several cultures. Their activities, which include plays, dances and other events, are aimed at fostering cross-national and cross-cultural understanding and friendship among the ethnic groups. The same groups perform Bamileke, Beti, Matakam and other dances with equal skill.

59. Information on racial discrimination is not a necessity in Cameroon, in as much as the cultures of the various ethnic groups which make up the population attach priority to welcoming "foreigners", who are easily accepted and integrated. Every Cameroonian has the opportunity to settle in the place of his or her choice in Cameroon, and interethnic marriages are very common.

60. Regarding human rights in general, the National Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms, one of whose goals is to educate the public about the human rights instruments by all means possible, collects and distributes international documentation on human rights and freedoms. As part of its activities, the Committee has organized human rights training and education seminars:

From 21 to 24 September 1993, a training seminar was held for the members of the National Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms;

From 28 to 31 March 1995, a training seminar was held for administrative and law-enforcement personnel at Bamenda;

In 1996, judges, lawyers, notaries and clerks attended a three-day human rights training seminar. The seminar, held at Mbalmayo, was organized by the National Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms, with financial assistance from the Government of the United States.

61. In addition, many activities are held annually in Cameroon on Human Rights Day (10 December). The media usually react favourably and cooperate in raising the people's awareness of human rights issues and United Nations activities in this area.